

Ravalli County Planning Department Priorities

Adopted December 18, 2008, by the Ravalli County Board of Commissioners

In addition to the day-to-day duties of the Planning Department, which include project review (including Open Lands Bond, subdivision, and floodplain applications), customer service & office administration, and litigation support, the Commissioners identified the following projects as priorities for the Planning Department:

1. Revise the Ravalli County Subdivision Regulations
2. Develop an Effective Enforcement Program
3. Provide Enhanced Voluntary Zoning District Outreach and Support
4. Develop the Rural and Natural Resources Planning Program
5. Develop Interlocal Agreements

The following paragraphs describe what each priority entails:

1. **Revise the Ravalli County Subdivision Regulations.** Ravalli County has looked to the same set of subdivision design guidelines since the year 2000. These design guidelines touch on only a few of the issues that appear with large and complex subdivisions. The Planning Department will revise, update, and modernize the existing subdivision regulations to adequately and objectively evaluate a wider range of subdivision proposals.
2. **Develop an Effective Enforcement Program.** The Board of Commissioners repeatedly heard citizens state the need to enforce existing regulations before implementing new programs. With this in mind, the Commissioners directed the Planning Department to generate a plan to implement an effective enforcement program for Ravalli County. The Planning Department will catalogue existing County Departments and programs with a greater need for code enforcement, evaluate successful enforcement programs from other jurisdictions to create a model for Ravalli County, and study the feasibility of hiring a code enforcement officer.
3. **Provide Enhanced Voluntary Zoning District Outreach and Support.** During the countywide zoning process, many individuals expressed a preference for encouraging neighborhoods to consider voluntary zoning districts (VZD). Unlike countywide zoning, VZDs do not require a county to have adopted a growth policy for their implementation. The Planning Department will engage in an outreach campaign and advertise that planners are willing to schedule meetings with individual neighborhoods to discuss their ideas about voluntary zoning districts, and provide those neighborhoods close guidance as they move forward with a VZD.
4. **Develop the Rural and Natural Resources Planning Program.** Over the past few months, staff focused primarily on the Open Lands Bond Program (OLBP) component of this program. However, there was also work to expand the scope to develop a comprehensive rural planning program that would identify the needs of and provide resources for rural and agricultural land owners. An inventory of current activities, available resources, and needs of the rural and natural resources community in Ravalli County had begun through formal and informal interviews with stakeholder groups and individuals. Once this assessment is

complete, the Planning Department intends to work with local stakeholders and other County departments and boards in order to address the needs appropriately.

5. **Develop Interlocal Agreements.** Interlocal agreements are a means of establishing effective communications and decision-making between local governments on issues of mutual interest. Ravalli County will discuss with its four incorporated municipalities – Darby, Hamilton, Pinesdale, and Stevensville – their thoughts on developing interlocal agreements.